Rural Community Power Structure: The Influence of Local Leaders on Community Decision Making in Ajaawa Community, Ogo Oluwa Local Government of Oyo State, Nigeria.

A.O. Oyeleke
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

*Corresponding Author: A.O. Oyeleke
Email: talktotunji02@yahoo.com

Abstract: This study examines the influence of local leaders on community decision making in Ajaawa community in Ogo-Oluwa Local government of Oyo state. Data were collected from sixty respondents who are male and female leaders using structuredinterview schedule which was validated and pre-tested. Finding reveals that the mean age of respondent is 53 years; 80% are male while 20% are female. About 58% influence decisions made on some community project like town hall, postal agency, palace and market. Overall, their influence was either for (87.1%) or against (12.9%) these projects. About 67.5% encourage people to support the decision to embark on such projects; about 10.9% discourage people while 21.7% only gave their consent but made no direct contribution to influence members of the community. The main strategy employed for executing the projects were through launching, self labour and levies.Chi square analysis revealed a significant relationship between involvement/support for the project and gender (town hall, market), level of education (postal agencies, market), occupation (postal agencies), and marital status (palace).
Keywords: Power, Influence, Leaders, Decision-Making, Community, Rural

INTRODUCTION
Background of the study

Power is define as the potentials or manifest ability of an individual or group to modify the actions of others. It is the ability to exact compliance or the ability to execute other ones' while irrespective of position [6]. Power has received a great deal of attention from people for ages. The attention people placed on power range from it acquisition and possession to it exertion and influence. Power structure has alsoreceived equal attention from people and leaders as it determines the nature of local leaders and amount of powers, which consequently affect the process of decision- making in a community.Power structure is defined as the pattern distribution of authority and influence among various local leaders in a group of community [7]. It is believed that local leaders have a lot of influence on decision making of a community especially in rural areas. Decision making in rural communities always relate to the attitude and different levels of acceptance and participation or rejection of community development projects [3]. Therefore, local leaders play a vital role in community development projects. By influencing decision-making process of the people, which affects acceptance or rejection of it?Local leaders hold a lot of power over the people they lead, especially in rural areas. A leader is the one who first perceives group needs far ahead others and thereafter plans and enlists the cooperation of others in its implementation. Most of the time, local leaders are traditional leaders e.g. kings, chief etc. who are born into a family or hereditary leadership position

which custom and tradition recognize [4]. Other categories of local leaders include: professional leaders, organizational leaders, social leaders and political leaders.

The significance of local leaders cannot be over emphasized as they perform various vital roles and functions in their community administration among group members, establishing structure in the group and implementing of the philosophy in the group[5]. They give legal backing to the rural development programsand this goes a long way to influence the decision of people towards rejecting or accepting. They take active role in planning and executing community objective and this give them privilege of knowing better than others and people know it and aspect their view. They organize, supervised, motivate and serve as spokesmenoutside the community.

In practice, local leaders are consulted first before others and so they influence the members for such course [1].Local leaders influence the view and decision of people while performing these functions andtheir leadership role put them in a niche position giving them opportunity to affect others' views and thought in decision making. It is therefore imperative to identify such leaders, their power and the structure of this power and measuretheirinfluence for future applications in change programs.

Statement of the Problem

Given the influence of local leaders on community decision, thishas been a growing interest among extension agencies and other bodies to study the local leadership in rural areas. But until now a comprehensive analysis of the community power structure and influence of local is yet to be carried out in Nigeria. It has been discovered that community decision has a lot of significance importance on community development projects.

Hence, agricultural and community development practitioners, extension agents and others interested bodies are not adequately aware of the indirect impact of local leaders on the proposed development projects by influencing their followers. It is against this background that this study attempt to answer the following question.

1. What is the prevailing power structure in existence in the community
2. How does the power structure affect the leadership position of each leader?
3. How do the local leaders influence their follower's thoughts, action and views?
4. What are the relationship between the community decision and the community development projects in existence?
5. How does the community power structure affect decision-making?

General Objective:

To investigate the influence of local leaders on decision making in Ajaawa Community Ogo-OluwaLocal Government Area of Oyo state.

Specific Objectives:

The specific objectives of this study include:
1. To determine the personal characteristics e.gSex, Age, Marital Status, Educational Background, Occupation, Leadership Position, Religion e.t.c of the respondents in the study area.
2. To identify community leaders.
3. To identify the power structure in the community.
4. To determine the various roles, influence or contribution of local leaders in various areas of decision-making.
5. To determine the influence of members on each of the community projects.

Statement of Hypothesis:

Based on the objective of the study, the following hypothesis would be tested:

1. There is no significance relationship between personal characteristic (e.gAge, Sex, Marital Status, Occupation, Educational Level, Religion, Leadership Position, etc.) of the leaders and the type of area of decision-making.

2. There is no significance relationship between the leader's contribution and the degree of influence of leaders in the community.

Significance of the Study

The result of this study will help to know the importance of various leaders in the community. Data and information in this write up would serve as a good reference material that could guide community development officers wishing people to adopt the project to plan an effective awareness and development service delivery in the rural areas.

Extension officers and students wishing to acquire knowledge and ideas on leader's roles relating to decision and policy making will find this thesis very useful. Also, much information on the level of influence of leaders and community development projects will be found useful to future researchers and indigenous knowledge.

This study basically investigates development projects and the influence of local leaders in such projects.

The focus is on the influence of the leaders and the decisions of the community. The various factors responsible for the decision-making relating to the community development projects are identified.

Limitation of the Study

Some of the respondents felt reluctant to supply vital information until they were persuaded by other elders. They felt that the researchers intended to expose their power structure to others.

METHODOLOGY
Study Area

The area of study is Ajaawa community, the head-quarter of Ogo-Oluwa Local Government Area of Oyo State. This community consists of mainly Yorubas with few Hausa and Egede people. By road it is situated at about 17 kilometers south of Ogbomoso and 30 kilometers north-west of Oyo town. Other communities surrounding the Ajaawa under the same local government authority include Ipeba, Moolo, Ojutaye, Mosunmaje, Otamakun, Obannisunwa, Ladauu, Lagbedue.t.c.

Vegetation

Ajaawa community is situated in the derived savanna zone with all grasses being the preponderant vegetation. The soil is well drained but fertile enough to be very productive agriculturally especially for the production of arable crops like cassava, maize, yam, cowpea, guinea corn tomato, pepper, leafy vegetables, coco yam, etc. some cash crops also produced include fruits, cocoa, kola nut and tobacco.

Population and Occupation

Ajaawa community is the headquarter and the largest town in Ogo-Oluwa Local Government Area of Oyo State with a population of about 37,000 inhabitants by 1991 census and a projected population of about 48,000 in 2001. The people of the area are mainly farmers, many having secondary occupation like trading, especially in food stuffs, produce buying, tailoring. Others are engage in pot-making,cloth dyeing, palm oil making, weaving etc. There are few places of importance in the town such as the big central market, the local government headquarters and the recreation centre's. The town is blessed with three primary schools. These are also many private nursery primary schools. There is also a secondary school named Baptist secondary grammar school Ajaawa. There is one big market which operates every five days. Also there is a big town hall and a post office.

Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

The sample for the research work was taken from population of individual community leaders. This was made possible through primary investigation made with community leaders and community members who also assisted a lot in identifying the leaders initially. The names of the individual leaders who contribute to the development in the community and are influential in the area of community decision making were shortlisted and interviewed. Sixty leaders were so identified and interviewed.

Data Collection

Data for the study was obtained with the use of interview schedule administered through the help and guidance of the traditional and political leaders. The interviews were personally conducted by the researcher.

Type of Information Collection

Interview schedule was used to collect data in which the following information were collected:

Demographical Technology: age, sex, marital status, religion, educational background, occupation, etc.

Community Socialization Factors: number of years spent in the community, past and present roles played in community decision making.

Information about the projects executed in the community.

The Interview schedule for individual community leaders were administered by personal interview in the local language (Yoruba) while responses were recorded in English language, except for the few literate ones among the leaders that filled the interview schedules by themselves. The administration of these interview schedules were made possible by the researcher in collaboration with the traditional leaders and officers of the local government council. The interview schedule consists of both closed and open ended questions (see appendix).

Properties of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by my supervisor. This is to ascertain that the instrument measure what it was supposed to measure. All ambiguous statements were removed from the instrument after which the instrument was pre-rested at Idi Araba another community in the nearby L.G.A. The questions were earlier interpreted to Yoruba language.

RESULT
Personal characteristics of the respondents
Age

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by age

Categories (year)	Frequency	Percentage
21 – 30	-	-
31 – 40	5	8.3
41 – 50	16	26.7
51 – 60	20	33.3
Above 60	19	31.7
Total	**60**	**100**

Mean- 53 years
Source: field survey, 2002

Table 1 shows that 8.33 percent of the respondents are between 31- 40 years about 26.67% are between 41 – 50 years; about 33.3% are between 51 – 60; while about 31.7 are above 60. No leader is below 30 years of age among the respondents.It can be deduced that there abundance of middle aged (respondents) he in Ajaawa community.
(Mean age – 53 years).

Gender

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Gender.

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Male	48	80.0
Female	12	20.0
Total	**60**	**100**

Source: field survey, 2012.
The data in table 2 show that 80% of the respondents are male while 20% are female.

Level of Education

Table 3: Distribution of Respondent by level of Education

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	6	10.0
Modern school	13	21.7
Secondary	6	10.0
Post Secondary	20	33.3
Adult education	8	13.3
Other formal education	-	-
None	7	7

Source: field survey, 2012.

The data in table 3 showed that 10 percent attended Primary and Secondary Education;33.3 attended Post-Secondary School; 21.7% have modern school certificate; 13.3% attended Adult Education and 11.7% have no education.

Occupation
Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Farming	16	26.7
Teaching/civil	21	35.0
service	18	30.0
Trading	5	8.3
others		
Total	**16**	**100**

Source: field survey 2012

Table 4 show that 26.7% engage in farming. Teachers and civil servant are 35% while 30% are traders and 8.33% of the respondents are engaged in other occupation.

Religion:
Table 5: distribution of respondent by religion

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Christianity	42	70.0
Islam	12	20.0
Traditional	6	10.0
Total	**60**	**100**

Source: field survey, 2012.

Table 5 shows that 70% of the respondents are Christians, 20% are Muslim while 10% are adherents of traditional religion.

Marital status:
Table 6: distribution of respondents by marital status

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Married	54	90.0
Single	3	50.0
Separated	-	-
Divorced	-	-
Widowed	3	5.0
Total	**60**	**100**

Source: field survey, 2012.
The data in table 6 above shows that 90 percent of the respondents are married, 5% are single while 5% are widowed. None of the respondents are divorced or separated.
The data also review that ever body that was interviewed (100%) are indigenes of the community.

Community Socialization Factors:
Length of Stay in the Community:

Table 7: Distribution of the Respondents by the years of stay in a Community

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 5	-	-
6 – 10	3	5.0
11 - 20	12	20.0
21 – 30	6	10.0
31 – 40	24	40.0
41 – 50	-	-
Above 50	15	25.0
Total	**60**	**100**

Source: field survey

The data in table 8 shows that 5% have spent between 6-10 years in the town among the respondents, 20% have spent between it 20, 10% between 21-30, 40.0% between 31- 40 while 25% have spent above 50 years and none have spent between 41-50

Leadership Types:
Table 8: Distribution of Respondents by Leadership types

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Social	18	30.0
Political	12	20.0
Traditional	18	30.0
Religion	12	20.0
Total	**60**	**100**

Source: field survey, 2012.
Table 10 shows that the social leaders are 30.0% the political leaders are 30.0% while religions leaders are 20.0% of the respondent

Decision in the Community:
The data shows that all the respondents agree that a community decision was made recently.
Table 9: distribution of respondents made recently.

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Road	3	5.0
School Development	6	10.0
Palace	18	30.0
Town Hall	18	30.0
Building for NYSC	3	5.0
Post Office	6	10.0
Market	6	10.0
Total	**60**	**100**

Source: field survey, 2012.

5.0% participate in the involved in the decision on road construction; 10.0% participate in the decision on palace, 30.0% are involved in the decision for town Hall, 5.0% are involved in the decision on building for NYSC, 10.0% participated in decision-making on post office while 10.0% are involved in the decision of building of central market.

Table 10: Distribution of the personal involvements of the individual community leadersin decision- Making about town hall, post agency, palace and central market.

Projects	Involvement					
	Total		Yes		No	
	Y	%	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Town hall	60	100	48	80.0	12	20.0
Postal agency	60	100	43	71.7	17	28.3
Palace	60	100	51	85.0	9	15.0
Central	60	100	45	75.0	15	25.0
Total/Mean	**60**	**100**	**47**	**78.0**	**13**	**22.0**

Source; field survey, 2012.

Table 10 shows that on town hall 80.0% were involved while 20.0% are not involved; 71.7 are involved in the decision on postal agency while 28.3% are not 85.0% are involved on the decision on town hall while 15.0% are not involved and 75.0% of the respondents are involved in decision on central market while 25.0% are not involved.

Table 11: Distribution of respondents based on the roles played by them on the decision on town hall, postal agency, palace and central market.

Projects	Encouraged people		Discourage people		No contribution		Totals	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	percentage	Frequency	percentage
Town hall	48	80.0	-	-	12	20.0	60	100
Postal agency	40	66.7	4	6.7	16	26.7	60	100
Palace	30	50.0	16	26.7	14	23.3	60	100
Central market	44	73.3	6	10.0	10	16.7	60	100
Mean	**40**	**67.5**	**7**	**10.9**	**13**	**21.7**	**60**	**100**

Source; field survey, 2012.

Table 11 shows that for the town hall 80% of the respondents encourage people while discouraged people and 20.0% made no contribution; on postal agency 66.7% are in support; 6.7% are against while 26.7% made no contribution. The response of the respondent shows 50% support for palace 26.7% made of people that try to discouraged people while 23.3% made no contribution and on market 73.3% encouraged people while 16.7% are neutral to the project.

Table 12: Distribution of Respondents by their Support for Projects.

Projects	Support		Against		Totals	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Town hall	57	95.0	3	5.0	60	100
Postal agency	55	91.7	5	8.3	60	100
Palace	42	70.0	18	30.0	60	100
Market	55	91.7	5	8.3	60	100

❖ Multiple Response
Source; field survey, 2002.

Table 12 shows that 95.0% are in support of town hall while 5.0% are against it: 91.7% are in support of postal agency while 8.3% are against it; 70.0% are in support of the palace while 30.0% are against it; 91.7% are support of market while only 8.3% of the respondents are against it.

Table 13: Distribution of the Respondents on the Reason for taking stand on the various Projects.

Projects	Necessary		Not Necessary		Totals	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Town hall	55	91.7	5	8.3	60	100
Postal	55	91.7	5	8.3	60	100
agency	42	70.0	18	30.0	60	100
Palace	59	98.3	1	1.7	60	100
Market						
Mean	**53**	**87.1**	**8**	**12.9**	**60**	**100**

Source; field survey, 2002.

Table 13: show that 19.7% see town hall and postal agency, development while 8.3% see them as not necessary; 70.0% see palace as necessary while 30.0% see it as not necessary while 98.3 see market as necessary while 1.7% see it as not necessary.

Table 14:Distribution of the respondents view about the strategies employed in executing the projects.

	Launching		Community contribution		Self labour		Government support		Combination of two		Combination of four		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Town hall	21	35.0	12	20.0	6	10.0	8	13.3	9	15.0	4	6.7	60	100
Postal agency	1	1.7	1	1.7	1	1.7	-	-	57	57	-	-	60	100
Palace	1	1.7	1	1.7	58	96.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	60	100
Market	1	1.7	59	98.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	60	100
	8	**10.0**	**18**	**30.4**	**16**	**27.1**	**2**	**3.3**	**16**	**3.3**	**1**	**17**	**60**	**100**

Table 15: Distribution of the respondents according to the role played by the community members on projects.

Project	Support		Against		Divided		Neutral		Total	
	Frequency	Percentage	frequency	percentage	Frequency	percentage	frequency	Percentage	Frequency	percentage
Town hall	46	76.7	-	-	6	10.0	8	13.3	60	100
Postal agency	54	90.0	2	3.3	1	1.7	3	5.0	60	100
Palace	33	55.0	15	25.0	7	11.7	5	8.3	60	100
Market	60	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	60	100
	48	804	4	704	4	5.9	4	6.7	100	100

Source: field survey, 2002

Table 15 shows that 76.7% of the respondents believed that community members are in support of town hall 10.0% believed that people are divide while 13.3% are against, 1.7% believed that people are divide while 5.0% are neutral 55.0% believed people supported palaces 25.0% believed that they are against 11.7% choose divided while 8.3% says that community members are neutral. 1.00% of the community members are in the table show that 1.7% and 98.3% saw launchings and community contribution as the strategies used for executing the projects respectively.

carnivals, the women will be in support of the market project because they are mostly involved in buying and selling.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING:

There is no significance between some personal characteristics and involvement/ support for particular community development project. The hypothesis testing reveals that gender is significantly related to involvement in decision making for town hall and market project. While the men will be in support of the town hall because of their numerous meeting and

Level of education was found to be significantly related to support for postal agencies and market while occupation was significantly influences support for the palace project.

Table-16: Level of education

Personal characteristic	Town Hall			Postal agency			Palace			Market		
	X^2	P	Dec	X^2	P	Dec	X^2	P	Dec	X^2	P	Dec
Age	2.51	47	NS	1.11	.78	NS	2.29	51	NS	2.8	42	NS
Gender	4.40	036	S	693	405	NS	750	380	NS	8.89	003	S
Educ. Level	8.18	147	N	14.86	011	S	3.96	56	NS	13.11	022	S
Occupation	5.28	155	NS	10.09	018	S	852	84	NS	3.41	332	NS
Religion	3.39	183	NS	3.09	212	NS	023	989	NS	2.22	329	NS
Marital status	950	622	NS	1.98	371	NS	6.01	05	S	34	843	NS
Length of stay	1.19	880	NS	3.37	497	NS	2.013	733	NS	6.13	190	NS

DISCUSSION:

The important of leaders in the community development cannot be over emphasized as the project reveals the roles in different ways. Generally, community leaders through local leaders deals with aspect of leadership which include legitimacy, influence supervision and motivation, most especially influence in decision making.

The strategies of local leaders in exerting their view and opinion in influencing the thought and action of people encouraging them until they come to accept their stand. For the success of any community development project or extension work it has to work through good local leaders who will not only articulate the need of their people and influence them toward getting this needs but also legitimized the programs for community development.

The major findings of this study are:
1. Majority 78% of the respondents are between the ages of 51 and 60 while 80% are male.
2. About 78^% of the respondent are act9ively involve in the decision makings while about 22% are not.
3. Majority of the respondents (about 68%) are fully involved in encouraging and soliciting for support of others while about 22% made on contribution while few about 10% discouraged others from such community development for one reason or the others.
4. Majority of the respondent around 88.2% see the project as necessary and supported it while few people of about 11.8% see it as not necessary and are thus against it.

CONCLUSION:

In view of the finding of the research the roles and influences of local leaders in the community decision making is essentials in Ajaawa community as a case study. Local leaders through the use of influence affect thought and view of community members on decision regarding community development and life. Community decision making results is grossly affected by leaders' view and opinion as it depend on the influence of local leaders. Therefore it can be concluded that local leaders has unparalleled influence over the decision made by their community.

RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the major finding of this study the following recommendations are made:
1. Government, extension agencies and private bodies should and introduce change programmes and development project through enlistment and education of leaders which all influence others community members.
2. The influence of local leaders especially on decision-making should be studied more in future.
3. Government and private bodies (extension agencies) should try and enlighten and educate community members so as to reduce undue influence of them by leaders.
4. Local leaders should be deeply involved in the planning and execution of rural development projects because they play major role in its acceptability and success.

REFERENCES
1. Adeogun OG; The Exercise Influence in NigeriaVillage Community. University of Reading, 1971; 34-61
2. Cartwright D, Zander A; Group Dynamic Research and Theory: Harer and Row Publishers, New York, Evasion and London, 1968
3. Clark TW; Community Structure and Decision-Making: Comparative Analysis, Chandler Publishers, 1968
4. Ekong EE; Rural Sociology: An Introduction and Analysis of Rural in Nigeria. JumakPublishing Limited, Lagos, 1988;
5. Jibowo AA; Essentials of Rural Sociology, GbemiSodipo Press Limited, Abeokuta, 1992.
6. Power RC; Power Actors and Social Change. Part II journal of Cooperative Extension, 1967; 5(4):239-240.
7. Walton J; Substance and Artifact, the Current of Research on Community Power Structure. Tthe America Journal of Sociology, 1966; 71:430-438.
8. Yuki GA (Ph.D.); Leadership in Organization, State University of New York at Albany; Prentice-Hall, 1981.